

the types of harmful employment regulations that will reduce or even eliminate middle class jobs in the United States.

“Europeanization” of U.S. labor and employment laws is not the type of change the middle class really needs.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

CHANGE IN IRAQ

Mr. BOND. Madam President, there is no doubt that right now American families are being squeezed on all sides. Gas prices are sky high and climbing. The cost of food is going up. So is the cost of college tuition and health care. So it is no surprise that “change” is the word everyone is talking about.

My colleagues on this side of the aisle and I want change, too, but we want commonsense solutions. We are the party of economic security. We think we should keep more of the money we earn. We favor more private sector solutions to health care. We want America’s energy future to be here in America, not the Middle East. We want to change the disastrous policy that has been implemented and kept by our fellow colleagues on the other side of the aisle for the last 30 years, a nonenergy policy, no production. As a Washington Post editorial pointed out today, Congress cannot repeal the laws of supply and demand. Demand worldwide has gone up but supply has not.

We have the answer to that problem right here in America. We want to change it and use the resources we have. We also want a strong commitment in the war on terror. Changing back to the policies of the 1990s is not the way to win the war on terror. Senator OBAMA has said we should go back to the 9/11 days, when terrorism was treated as just another law enforcement matter. He pointed to the prosecution of the World Trade Center bombers as the example to follow. That is precisely the type of policy that led to attacks on American embassies and the USS *Cole*. That is the kind of change that will make the Nation less safe again.

If the Democrats wish to talk about change, let’s talk about change, change that matters and change that they have been unwilling to acknowledge, a change when we started executing the war on terror by going after the terrorists in the safe havens. We have kept our country safe from attack since 9/11. Under the leadership of GEN David Petraeus, Iraq has changed and changed dramatically. So why can’t my colleagues on the other side of the aisle change with it. Why can’t they change their stance and get behind our service men and women who want to succeed and have had tremendous successes?

President Bush announced the surge and the new counterinsurgency in 2007. Iraq was a violent place at the time.

Al-Qaida in Iraq held large swaths of territory. Shiite death squads roamed much of Baghdad, and the Iraqi political leadership appeared helpless. So President Bush, understanding the consequences of failure and withdrawal, changed. He changed military leadership. General Petraeus changed to a new strategy, a strategy for victory, of counterinsurgency or COIN that involves getting out among the Iraqi people, working directly with Iraqis committed to a peaceful, stable Iraq. That is a change my son saw in Al Anbar, when his Marine scout sniper platoon helped clear Al Anbar and turn it over to Sunni citizens and police. We still face big challenges in Iraq but with a far more optimistic picture emerging. Al-Qaida has been almost, if not completely, routed in Al Anbar, once declared the center and base of operations for al-Qaida in Iraq.

On May 12 of this year, a prolific terrorist sympathizer by the name of Dir’a Limen Wehded posted a study on the Internet in which he laments “the dire situation that the mujaheddin find themselves in in Iraq.” He is talking about his guys, the bad guys. He cites the steep drop in the number of insurgent operations conducted by various terrorist groups, most notably al-Qaida’s 94 percent decline in operational ability over the last 12 months. In Sadr City, Iraqi forces, the forces of the Iraqi Shiite leader al-Maliki, have rolled through huge Shiite enclaves relatively unopposed. Iraqi forces did the same in April in the southern city of Basra, where the Iraqi Government advanced its goal of establishing sovereignty and curtail the powers of the militias.

When General Petraeus returned to Washington in September of last year, even at that time he reported that the number of violent incidents, civilian deaths, ethnosectarian killings and car and suicide bombings had declined dramatically from the previous December. But despite all this positive change, many on the other side of the aisle are too vested in political defeat to see it. In fact, most Democrats opposed the surge, claiming it is more of the same and would neither make a dent in the violence nor change the dynamics in Iraq. The Democratic leader proclaimed “This war is lost” and that U.S. troops should pack up and come home, a disastrous change that even many thoughtful scholars and commentators who opposed going into Iraq initially say now is not the way to go. It would be a disaster. General Petraeus returned again to Washington in April this year, and violence has been reduced further. American casualties have declined significantly. Al-Qaida was virtually eliminated in the northern city of Mosul, as verified by the terrorists themselves. There are more Iraqi security forces. The Iraqi Government has passed a variety of laws promoting reconciliation. Prime Minister al-Maliki continues to demonstrate he can stand up to fellow Shi-

ites supporting violence and Iranian-backed special groups. There is every reason to embrace the positive change we have seen and not abandon it and not force a withdrawal. For that is not change but, rather, a policy that would put Iraq back on the path toward violence, terrorism, and chaos.

The change we have made has made our country safer, going after terrorists, helping Iraq stabilize their country, turning control over to them, and moving our forces back from the front lines of offense to a support role. That is the change we need to keep our country safe for the future from terrorist attacks.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

ENERGY

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, so much discussion has taken place of late about the high price of energy and what it is doing to family budgets. We don’t need to tell the American consumer what is going on with high prices. They are living it directly in each and every one of our States.

At today’s prices, Americans are paying \$1.6 billion daily to buy fuel. This is about twice what they paid 2 years ago. The national average price of gasoline passed the \$4.08-per-gallon mark, and fuel is consuming about 6 percent of the typical household budget. This eats up the money families need for food, clothing, medicine, education, 6 percent of the average U.S. household budget.

In my State of Alaska—you hear me say this all the time—our statistics are a little bit different. I need to let you know what kind of a hit Alaska’s families are taking when it comes to high energy prices.

Right now, in Anchorage, the State’s largest community, it is about 10 percent of the typical household budget that is directed toward energy costs. In the southeastern part of the State, where I was born and spent my early years, they are seeing about 14 percent of their family budget going toward energy costs. In the community of Fairbanks, up in the interior, where I spent my growing-up years in high school and years as a young adult, 22 percent of the household budget is going toward their energy costs. Nearly a quarter of the family budget is going into home heating fuel, into gas at the pump, into keeping their home warm during the long winter months—22 percent of the family budget.

As I have said before, people in Alaska are no longer angry about their energy prices. They are very afraid. You cannot continue on a trend such as this with this much of the family budget being dedicated to your energy prices and still survive.

There has been great debate on this floor about, How do we fix it? How do we reduce the price of energy for the American family? There are some who